



Town of Warren, Rhode Island

Minutes of the Economic Development Board

The Town of Warren, RI Economic Development Board met at a Regular Meeting on June 15, 2015 at 6:15 p.m. at Warren Town Hall. The presiding officer was Karen Dionne. Board members present were Sara Volino, Ben Terry, Mark Lombardi, Kathleen Tucciarone and Stephen Sypole. Stephen Smith was present as a guest. Gareth Eames was present at the meeting as a guest. Keri Cronin was present at the meeting as a guest. Kristin MacDonald was present at the meeting to serve as Secretary to the EDB.

1. Review and Approval of Minutes from the Regular Meeting of May 18, 2015.

The minutes from the regular meeting held on May 18, 2015 were reviewed by the board via email. The minutes were approved with the following correction: Ms. Dionne emailed past correspondence from the EDB to Town Council to the Town Clerk.

With the correction noted, a motion was made by Mr. Sypole to approve the minutes from the regular meeting of May 18, 2015. The motion was seconded by Ms. Dionne and all members were in favor.

2. Discussion of signage regulations and code enforcement process and procedures.

Mr. Eames, the town Zoning Official, was present at the meeting to answer questions regarding signage regulations and enforcement procedures. In order to emphasize the frustration of the EDB with lack of progress, Ms. Dionne read aloud a letter to Town Council on these issues dated June 3, 2011. Mr. Eames talked the board through the basic procedure on the town following through with a zoning violation. Basically he stated that the procedure can be lengthy and complicated for both minor and major violations. The board asked if Mr. Eames would mind if the board sent him emails with photos of specific instances of signage violations. Mr. Eames said he would be willing to look at these; however, he cannot promise a time frame for his response. When asked how the EDB could help, Mr. Eames suggested that the board be proactive and help educate business and property owners about improving their commercial properties and adhering to regulations. Mr. Sypole asked about using fines as a method of enforcement. Mr. Eames stated that in municipal court the system emphasizes compliance over fines; therefore, fines are often not effective for enforcement.

Mr. Eames left the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

3. Discussion with Keri Cronin regarding Discover Warren regarding how the EDB can support their efforts.

Ms. Cronin reported that Discover Warren is in the process of relaunching their website and updating the Warren walking map. As far as supporting future efforts, Ms. Cronin asked that the EDB might help to promote the Warren Walk-a-bout by building up the food venue and by getting more artists involved. The board discussed filling windows in vacant stores on Main Street for the event. Ms. Cronin said she would keep the EDB updated on Discover Warren events as well as the next planning meeting for the Warren Walk-a-bout.

4. Update on status of new town website

There will be no further action on the town website until the funding for the project is officially available. When the funding is available the next step will be to prepare an RFP. Mr. Smith said he will begin to study similar RFP's from other companies to prepare for the project.

5. Update on planning of September town business open house.

The board discussed the details of hosting a business open house. This would be a "meet and greet" event possibly with a presentation or speaker. The board discussed the venue, possible speakers and the possibility of involving Discover Warren.

A motion was made to adjourn by Ms. Volino, the motion was seconded by Ms. Tucciarone, and all members were in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristin M. MacDonald
July 18, 2015

